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## From the President

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## From the President

How does one end her tenure as Southeastern Library Association President? Obviously, there is a tremendous need to extend thanks to all the members who have taken their leadership responsibilities seriously and worked diligently to further the reach of the Association.

Beyond that, please allow me to share some insights gained and lessons learned as I've taken this journey. I encourage each of you to become more active in our regional association. The success of SELA is dependent on you, not your colleagues. Make sure that your voice resonates and that you put SELA to work for you.

Next, we need to think of all the new and aspiring librarians and extend a welcoming hand to them. Whether through a formal mentoring program or informal coffee chats, it is imperative that we share our knowledge and vision with them. This will enable them to build on our success and take Southeastern libraries to the next level.

Remember team building - it takes a village. Working with colleagues gives us a broader perspective on life and work. Sometimes an outside view or a second opinion will help us find a better, quicker or more sensible solution.

Business is no longer the usual routine. The combination of technological advances and a well-educated staff has taken libraries to new heights. New buildings and ground-breaking programs have provided the public with enhanced Twenty-First Century services.

The converse is that our customers can't be taken for granted. We can't be complacent in our success. There are many competitors proactively searching for the public's time and dollar.

We need to strengthen our commitment to diversity. With the U.S. population topping 300 million, the make-up of our country and the Southeast is evolving into a new blended society. As librarians, we need to make sure that our libraries are reaching out to all and providing resources to meet community needs

Librarians need to combat illiteracy. This can be done by becoming a tutor or by providing funding, space, staff, and materials for the effort. The demands of everyday life require a highly trained and educated workforce.

Advocacy is one of our core values. If we don't speak up for libraries who will? A small investment in lobbying and developing citizen advocates will pay big dividends. Whether it is sending an email to a congressman, developing a bond referendum, or bringing your customers to Legislative Day, every effort is a small but important step in rallying support for libraries.

And lastly, we need to take pleasure in our profession. Throughout my career, I have received so much from participation in local, state, regional and national associations. These opportunities to broaden my horizons have enriched my life, both personally and professionally.

It has been a pleasure to serve as the President of the Southeastern Library Association. I wish only the best to our incoming President Faith Line and each of you.

See you in the spring at our Leadership Conference,

Judith